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## FACTS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT ARY SCHEFFER.

ARY SCHEFFER was born at Dordrecht, at Holland, in 1795, at a time when that country formed a portion of Napoleon's empire. The French claim Scheffer nationally, not only because he was educated and lived and died in France, but on account of his birthright under the civil law. Scheffer was the son of an artist and the eldest of three brothers; their father died young, leaving his sons in charge of their mother, who was a woman of intelligence and good judgment, and one well qualified to superintend the education of her children, and foster their budding talents. Arnold, the youngest, entered upon a literary career, and Ary and Henry became artists.

Ary Scheffer showed his artistic powers at a very early age; he was in fact a precocious genius, for he exhibited a picture, the figures in which were of the size of life, as early as 1807, when but twelve years of age. In America the press and injudicious friends would probably have developed the young Ary into an artist of mediocre ability, and then have left him to struggle along in life as he best could, the victim of a well-intended but a shallow appreciation. As it was, the king of Holland and the Dutch public flattered him to excess; his mother, however, wisely considered that knowledge and discipline formed the only substantial basis for future success, and that a boy's efforts, however promising, were not entitled to like admiration with works of mature power, and that culture, and not notoriety, was the first condition of his progress. She accordingly collected the remains of her patrimony and proceeded to Paris, where, in 1812, she placed Scheffer in the studio of Guerin.

When Scheffer began his student-life the public taste was divided between the classicisms of the revolution and a growing school of *genre* subjects. Both schools—the first the "high Art," of the day—were sufficiently artificial; Greuze represented the *genre* school, and David the classic school. The galleries of the Louvre are crowded with specimens of both schools, particularly that of the classic taste, huge canvases covered with mythological figures, Greek and Roman heroes, allegorical fancies, etc., all of it cold and formal Art, such as was to be expected from the unnatural idealism of the eighteenth century. The classic school grew out of a reverence for the forms, characters, and ideas of antiquity, inspired by the master minds of that century, and established by them as the best standard for social and artistic reforms. The result shows that Art produced as many absurd ancient ideas on canvas as were displayed by society in the civil experiments of the French Revolution. The Classic school was in the last stages of consumption when Scheffer came to Paris. Guerin, an artist of power, even genius, was among the last, if not the last of these modern classic masters. Gericault, Scheffer, and Delacroix became his pupils, but not disciples; they broke loose from the orthodox affectations of both schools, and treated subjects of more universal significance. Dela-

roche, on his appearance, added strength to his *confrères*. These artists began by representing humanity in situations and under the control of emotions which were intelligible to modern feeling and thought, and they painted pictures in a purer style; in short they were artistic reformers in the very best sense. Although the slowest to mature and the least brilliant of all, Scheffer contributed the most toward this reform, inasmuch as he not only helped to found a new school, but because his works represent its most elevated aims.

The late exhibition of the works of Ary Scheffer contained 107 examples, three of these being pieces of sculpture, and the rest paintings and drawings. This collection by no means embraced the whole of his productions, nor even a majority of his most celebrated pictures, the possessors of his best works being in many cases indisposed to risk the chances of injury or loss to their treasures, and many of them being permanently fixed in public galleries.

The works of Ary Scheffer may be divided into three classes, exclusive of portraits—namely domestic or *genre* Art, poetic Art, and religious Art, or, as Vitet says, "The world as it is, the world of poetry and the world of faith."

Of his portraits there were in the exhibition about forty-five examples, the most important being portraits of *Lafayette*, *Béranger*, *Odillon Barrot*, *Liszt*, *Rossini*, *Lamennais*, *Cavaignac*, and *Villemain*. A remarkable, and, we think, conjectural head of *Calvin*, may be mentioned in connection with this department, also a portrait of Scheffer by himself.

Of *genre* Art the following are his principal works (those exhibited marked with an asterisk): *La Veuve du Soldat*,\* *Les Enfants du Marin*\*, *Le Retour du Conscri*, *Les Orphelins sur la Tombe de leur Mère*, *La Sœur de Charité*\*, *L'Incendie de la Ferme*, *Les Pêcheurs pendant la Tempête*\*, *Scène d'Invasion*\*, etc., all painted previous to 1829.

The poetic series begins with *Les Femmes Suliotess*\* (a sort of transition picture between the above class and the poetic), and consists of numerous subjects drawn from Goethe, Byron and Dante. Among these are a series illustrative of "Faust," *Martle et Marguerite*\*, *Marguerite au Rouet*, *Faust tourmenté par le Doute*, *Marguerite au prie-Dieu*\*, *Marguerite au Sabbat*, *La Sortie de l'Eglise*\*, *La Promenade au Jardin*, and *Marguerite à la Fontaine*\*. After these came the three representations of *Mignon*, *Mignon regrettant sa patrie*\*, *Mignon aspirant au ciel*\*, *Mignon et le vieux Joueur de Harpe*\* (belonging to the Queen of England); then a *Lénore*\*, from Burger's ballad; and from Schiller, *Le Coupeur de Nappe* and *Le Laroyeur*\*, from Byron, *Medora*\* and the *Giaour*\*, and from Dante, one subject each, illustrative of "Il Paradiso" and "L'Inferno," the *Dante* and *Beatrice* and *Francesca da Rimini*\*, the last being the crown and glory of the poetic series. These works were all painted previous to 1835, while in the prime of life.

His religious Art consists chiefly of ten subjects of Christ, including the *Christus Consolator*, the *Christus Remunerator*, the *Tentation du Christ*,\* and the *Christ au Roseau*. Added to these are *Saint Augustin et Sainte Monique*,\* *Saintes femmes au tombeau*,\* *Ruth et Naomi*,\* and *Jacob et Rachel*,\* to which may be added the work he was engaged upon at the time of his death, in 1858, entitled *Les Douleurs de la terre s'élevant vers le ciel*.\* Besides this work, Scheffer had in mind a series of compositions illustrative of passages in the book of Job.

Scheffer painted an equestrian portrait of Henry IV. for Louis Philippe. We are told that when this picture was hung in the historic gallery of Versailles, the king, deeming it improper that Henry IV. should appear bareheaded in the midst of his cavaliers, who all wore *casques*, directed another artist to cover the king's head with a grey felt hat and plumes; an attendant cavalier, who acted as the bearer of Henry IV.'s *casque*, was left as Scheffer painted him. This picture, furthermore, was cut off at the bottom at the expuse of its perspective, under the pretext that it occupied too much space.

Of the material value of Art—unfortunately, nowadays, the only view that has any significance for some people—an idea may be had by quoting the sums obtained for certain pictures painted by Scheffer, for the Duke of Orleans, and which have been sold at auction since the duke's death. The *Giaour* brought 23,500 francs, the *Medora* brought 19,500 frs., the *Christus Consolator* brought over 60,000 frs., and *Francesca da Rimini* 43,600 frs. The insurance effected on the collection exhibited was for 2,000,000 frs. The exhibition produced over \$10,000, from May to July; its entire receipts being appropriated to an artist's fund society.

Before turning to other matters, we would state that the United States possesses five works by Scheffer. These consist of a reduced copy of *Christus Consolator*, made by the artist for the use of the engraver, and now in the possession of W. S. Bullard, Esq., of Boston; *Dante and Beatrice*, a duplicate of the original, with a few minor alterations, and *Macbeth and the Witches*, in the possession of C. C. Perkins, Esq., of Boston; a head of *Lafayette*, belonging to W. H. Aspinwall, Esq., and a portrait of *Mrs. Belmont*, belonging to August Belmont, Esq., both in this city. In addition to these works, there have been exhibited in New York the *Tentation du Christ*, *Christ au Roseau*, and a *Dead Christ*, all of which have been returned to Europe.

We select two or three descriptions of subjects treated by Scheffer, chiefly to show the artist's concepitive powers; and first of one of the *genre* subjects—the *Scene d'Invasion*. This picture represents the pastor Oberlin, in the midst of weeping women and children, escorting a cart bearing furniture and a mattress, on which are stretched some wounded soldiers. A peasant, who holds a discharged gun, extends his shattered arm in the direction of a troop of Cossacks, who, on the horizon, gallop around a burning

village-church, on the spire of which still floats the tri-color flag. The next is a sketch of *Léonore* (a treatment of the subject different from the painting bearing the same title). The betrothed hangs, like a lily in the rain, on the iron arm of the rider, who clasps her. A figure, dashed in with a single stroke of the brush, salutes the couple on their swift passage with ironical gravity; on the right, upon an elevation bathed in blue light, we see dim phantom dancing around a gibbet, and mingling with a tempest of attendant spirits and ghosts, either grotesque or horrible, and all gliding before the eye with the quietude of a dream. This sketch, as such, is said to be one of Scheffer's finest efforts. The subjects drawn from Faust are too well known by engravings to require description; also the Mignon series, and of all his religious subjects, except *Les Douleurs de la terre s'élevant vers le ciel*, the work on which he was engaged at the time of his death. Upon an upright canvas we see a composition of fourteen figures in groups of three, representing souls aspiring to God, and ascending heavenward, the different groups symbolizing stages of emotion, ranging from sorrow and misery to eternal joy. The lower portion of the composition is in transparent shadow, in the midst of which figures appear weeping and struggling with earthly ties and griefs, two of them at the bottom of the picture being in some respects a repetition of Francesca and Paolo. In proportion as the human forms ascend and recede from their terrestrial habitation, anguish abates, supplications diminish, and the deep shadows of misery are changed for the repose of faith and the light and joys of heaven. While the beings who still contend with the passions of life below only partially and remotely see the splendor of felicity, others, illuminated by faith and renewed by grace, float aloft in near contemplation of the city of God, the serenity of their countenances glowing with celestial reflections, and melting away in the pure blue, indicating that purified souls are ravished with the music of the seraphim, and that they have looked upon the radiance of Paradise.

Of Scheffer's private life but few hints are afforded us, and these we accordingly glance at. One of his friends speaks of Scheffer as a man remarkable for his benevolence, and that to describe his acts of beneficence in detail so as to escape the commonplace laudation of an epitaph, would demand revelations, which Scheffer himself would never consent to make; and yet which leave an important hiatus in his portrait. Of his friendship and fidelity the public know something through his well-known relations to the family of Louis Philippe, whose children, especially the Princess Marie, he educated in Art, and for whom he painted some of his finest works. Scheffer's political career is also an important part of his life; a good idea of it may be had in the following anecdote. Scheffer was an officer of the Legion of Honor. After the terrible and fatal days of June, 1848, when Scheffer bravely led a detachment of the National Guard, the cross of a commander was tendered to him as an acknowledgment of his services. "If this distinction," he replied, "had

been bestowed upon me in my career as an artist for the merit of my works, I would have received it with deference and satisfaction; but as I have to adorn myself with a collar which recalls the horrible conflicts of civil war—never!" A love for music is another important trait of his character. The best musical genius of Paris was found in his studio. There was an almost perpetual concert there, if, as M. Vitet says, "they could be termed concerts—those *matinées* without a programme, without formality, almost without an audience, when the performers seemed to play or rather improvise for themselves alone, so free were they, so attentively listened to, and so thoroughly comprehended!"

In respect to the value of criticisms on Scheffer's works, it may be said that few minds are adapted to the task. To criticise well in Art presupposes a wide knowledge of symbolism and an appreciative nature, if not a sympathetic one with that of the artist, and critics with such qualifications are rare. That Scheffer was no colorist, that his works were often feeble in this respect, may be admitted. That his religious art was philosophical and sentimental may be admitted, too, in deference to vague conceptions of what is true and beautiful Art, but that his lack of power in color, or that his peculiar tone of feeling subtracts from his right to be considered as one of the commanding artistic spirits of the world, cannot be allowed. His portraits were conspicuous for qualities similar to those of his ideal works, being faithful in character, and of delicate and subtle expression; his ideal works (especially those of the poetic class), were, as M. Vitet says, "immense victories, triumphs of the spirit which are of no less value in the domain of Art than the conquests of the telescope in the starry firmament. A new and successful expression of the ideal is the discovery of a new world." The charm of *Dante and Beatrice*, for instance, and the hold this design has upon us, proceeds from its being a new ideal, as well as from the excellence of its Art. This picture may be called a new symbol of the elevation of woman, and may be ranked with the old one of the Virgin Mary. Whatever else may be said of Catholicism, it practically installed a standard of morality superior to Jewish or mythological standards, and in the condition of woman during the middle ages, so greatly in advance of that of ante-catholic times, we see the evidences of it. Humanity, grateful for the service, instinctively canonized the idea in the person of the Virgin Mary; Art made the idea familiar through a series of lovely madonnas, which, although designed for devotees, have found sympathy outside of the altar, and have been welcomed by the moral and æsthetic instincts of the entire world. This philosophy was instinctively, if not intelligently, carried out by Dante in his creation of Beatrice. Having tested life practically, the poet finds a solace for countless failures and a wounded spirit, by reviving that innocent and inspiring dream of the *Vita Nuova*, his boyhood's love for Beatrice. He takes her up as a myth, and associates her with himself in his *Commedia* in the chivalric

sense of a patroness, and as he wanders through Hell and Purgatory, he poetically pictures her according to his conception of woman's feeling and mission; his rich and passionate imagination, purified by experience, elevates Beatrice into that holy moral atmosphere which Dante knew to be the only sphere of action that was at all harmonious with the highest beauty of the loveliest of God's creatures. In the poem, Dante's gaze is ever directed upward to Beatrice, while she always appears as the mediator between him and the celestial realms, which he can only contemplate through her. Scheffer has thus painted Dante and Beatrice. He has placed Dante a little lower than his guardian angel, the attitudes and sentiment of the figures fully conveying the chastened ideas of the poem. Scheffer, in embodying Dante's creation, has put an old Christian idea into a new shape; he has crystallized it by Art, and made its profound meaning visible (so entirely opposite to the Jewish view of woman, which associates woman with the *fall of man*); and he has done it in so simple a form that it can be at once recognized by the rudest as well as by the most cultivated instincts. In respect to his religious art, no painter, since Da Vinci and Raphael, has portrayed Christ so as, comparatively speaking, to arrest a moment's contemplation. Scheffer's idea of Christ, if not wholly new or entirely satisfactory, is nevertheless of a sentiment so tender and touching as to make it one of the three noblest standards of the Redeemer that Art has given to us. M. Réan has finely analyzed the merits of the *Tentation du Christ*, and as in his thoughts may be found the best illustration of the ideal value of Art, as well as an elucidation of some of its fundamental principles, we give a translation of his article.

"The temptation of Christ on the mountain could not fail to inspire an artist, who, better than any other, has best known how to embody moral ideas and stamp an image of all that enchants us, improves us, and softens us. This simple and sublime subject has scarcely been painted until the present time; I know of no work which represents it by any master. A scene where the Son of God is shown to us subject to a moral ordeal and contending with Satan, as if on equal terms, presents Christ to us in an aspect too human to be sanctioned by the exalted faith of orthodox centuries. The middle age, it is true, sometimes attempted it in the series of figures of its storied Bibles; but in treating them it never went beyond the grotesque and the fantastic. Satan, for the miniaturists, was always a kind of burlesque harlequin, muffled up in a cowl, with his face concealed behind a misshapen mask; or otherwise an airy vision reflecting itself in space like a nightmare, a conception that does not lack a certain degree of originality, but from which there is nothing to be drawn of an elevated moral sentiment. Scheffer is the first artist who has selected this passage in the Evangelist and extracted its true symbolic meaning, and, by discarding details which exhibit too strongly the impress of the epoch and the country where the legend was formed, has known how to interpret it in a way suited to the religious ideas of our time.

"To the painter, evangelical scenes offer the remarkable advantage of resting upon received opinions already idealized in every conscience, and which the imagination surrounds with a prestige of sanctity. The artist does not create the poetry of his subjects ; he accepts it already made : it is essential that the half of his work should already have been sketched by popular belief, and that opinion should have surrounded the head of his subject with a halo. The first condition of great art is a body of religious ideas accepted by all and by the artist himself, not as a dogmatic symbol, which is quite an indifferent matter (for Perugino, it is said, denied God and the soul, and the age which inspired the *stanze* and the Sistine chapel had little faith), but as a sort of common language by which we may understand one another. The painter has no more right than the poet to frame his own mythology ; every attempt that he makes to invent his poem, not content with expressing a cycle of accepted legends, he falls into allegory and gradually loses himself in enigmas. The public very rarely yields itself to the dogmas of painters and sculptors, which, in order to be comprehended, require an explanatory *libretto*. And then again, when it concerns the interpretation of poetic or religious themes recognized by all, the artist must be left entirely free ; the broadest explanation, the simplest theology, a hint, a misconstruction, all will be right, provided that in their bearing upon a known subject he succeeds in exciting within us a sentiment of good and beautiful things. Symbols signify just that which they are made to signify ; man makes holiness out of what he believes in, as he makes beauty out of that which he loves. The sacred text, owing to the habit of attaching our religious emotions to it, and to that broad interpretation which allows one to find there whatever he desires, thus becomes a vast shade where every good thought finds shelter and repose.

"Largely comprehended, the scene chosen by Scheffer is truly one of the most solemn of the Testament. In all of the divine missions there is a moment of decisive action when the thought which comes from above stands struggling with lower thoughts, and when human weakness hesitates under the burden of its apostolic duty. Almost all grand vocations, and it is one of the signs of their celestial origin, have begun with trouble, timidity and temptation. The first time that Moses stood before God on Horeb, he stammered, sought for excuses, and raised up difficulties. Joan of Arc hesitated between her native village, her home that backed against the church, her youthful friends and the voice from heaven. When the Buddhist, Saky Mouni, conceived the project of freeing creatures from change and from death, and of arriving at supreme intelligence by annihilating his personality, he had to overcome all the powers of nature which leagued together to seduce him and render his design abortive. Mahomet, who did not always resist the instigations of Satan to the extent that he should have done, but who, in the beginning, was prompted by a truly religious sentiment, struggled a long time in the stony val-

leys that lie in the neighborhood of Mecca. The first apparitions of his prophetic genius were accompanied with profound agitation ; he would often return to his house overwhelmed and discouraged ; Kbadidja consoled him and strengthened his faith. How many others who have been called to speak in the name of God have sunk under trial, and have accepted the proposition of Satan, 'If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine !'

"More free than the theologian, and above all, the critic, the artist might even suppose that, at the commencement of his mission, when Christ meditated the world's salvation, the idea of a terrestrial empire based upon violence, may have crossed his mind for an instant. Instead of a redemption through faith and the purification of souls, he might have imagined a redemption by the sword. A question like this : Christ or Mahomet ? the world, shall it be saved by the word or by conquest, by persuasion or by force ? may have occurred to him. Such is the moment which Ary Scheffer has selected. Upon a peak boldly projecting upward into space, and whose abrupt sides, plunging downward into an abyss, alone indicate the measure of its height, takes place the mystery of that mighty struggle, the reward of which is the universe : the celestial mind and the infernal mind, good and evil, are there alone with each other in the region of clouds ; they do not see the world whose destiny is to be decided upon these heights. Satan, with his crisped fingers points to and offers the kingdoms of the earth. Everything about him breathes an immoral and scornful skepticism. He has no comprehension of what there is noble in human nature ; believing it to be wholly governed by egotism and cupidity, he would deem that he was bestowing too much honor upon it to suppose it capable of obeying anything but imposture ; *mundus vult decipi*. The Satan of Scheffer is the ambitious man, the politician, the man of the world who seeks to conquer the earth with lies, violence and contempt. In that he is less skillful than he imagines, he deceives himself and he receives the rebuke which human nature will always extend to those who, trusting to its vileness, do not sufficiently regard its elevated instincts. Christ, without an effort, points to heaven and repels the infernal suggestion by the sentiment of his divine nature. To the idea of a profane kingdom he opposes the spiritualist formula, "My kingdom is not of this world." Impregnable in the faith of his mission, he is not affected, and only replies to the seducer by a look full of meekness and compassion. I should say, indeed, that he is not at all *tempted*, and I honor Scheffer for having in this respect modified the traditional view. To be tempted is to be half overcome ; the proper aim of the Son of God is to attain that elevated region where the soul, firmly planted upon its idea of moral beauty, can, although encompassed, resist, because placed by its nobility in the happy impossibility of doing evil.

"Nothing equals the calmness, the grandeur, the lofty serenity of Scheffer's idea of Christ. His heavenly origin shines forth much more in the majesty of his bearing, in

his noble figure, in his stately and dignified attitude, than in the hieratical emblem of light which encircles his brow. These are all essential attributes of beauty, only not as antique art comprehended them in their material and somewhat brutal crudity, but tempered, subdued and refined by a fast of forty days, and by solitude and the cold of the mountain. We would say, however—and our thought is not intended as a criticism—that the Satan of Ary Scheffer appears to us superior to his Christ. Evil is more easily expressed than good, hell with more facility than paradise. Good is uniform, I would almost say monotonous ; good is, by its nature even, beyond all imaging, and it is in some measure lowering it, any effort to render it by material traits. Were the figure of Christ painted by the pencil of angels, like the Madonnas of Fra Angelico, it would ever be inferior to our own ideal. Evil, on the contrary, offers variety and an infinity of aspects. Evil could be banished from this world and the artist yet be permitted to retain it as a mythological personage and an excellent fiction.

" Of all the beings that were formerly cursed, and which curse the toleration of our century has removed, Satan is, without dispute, the one which has gained the most by the progress of knowledge and by universal civilization. He has become gradually mollified during his long journey from Persia to us, he has cast aside the wickedness of Ahriman. The middle ages, which knew nothing of toleration, represented him at pleasure as ugly, wicked and tormented, and as a climax of disgrace, ridiculous. Milton at length comprehended the unfortunate victim, and began that metamorphosis which the severe impartiality of our day was to perfect. A century so fruitful as our own in every species of claim for rights and privileges, could not fail to find reasons for excusing an unfortunate revolutionist who was driven into hazardous enterprises by the necessity of action. A mass of motives could be brought forward to extenuate his fault, against which it would not answer to be too severe. I prefer, however, to attribute our toleration to a better cause, and to suppose that, if we have become indulgent to Satan, it is because Satan has thrown off a portion of his wicked nature, and is no longer that evil genius who was once the object of so much hatred and terror. Evil is evidently in our day less powerful than formerly, and our toleration, is it not itself the best proof that good has triumphed ?

" One rests convinced of it in the presence of the picture that we are striving to interpret. Beautiful, like all noble creatures, more unfortunate than wicked, the Satan of Scheffer indicates the last effort of Art to dissolve the old dualism and to attribute evil to the same source as good, the heart of man. One of the most delicate thoughts of this great artist was to give a sentiment of inferiority to the genius of hell ; the last effort Satan makes to counteract the work of the Son of God is a desperate undertaking, and he well knows that his reign is over. It is this, doubtless, which has softened him. He has lost his horns and

his talons ; he preserves only his wings, an appendage which still attaches him to the supernatural world, only retained, it would seem, to augment the triumph of the pure human form, in the person of Christ, over the hybrid form of a mythological creation. He lacks vigor, perhaps, and I am rejoiced at it. It was permitted to the middle age, which constantly lived in the presence of evil, strong, armed and fortified, to bear toward Satan that implacable hatred which its Art translated by an expression of sombre energy. We of the present day are not forced to such a stern obligation. We are occasionally reproached for our optimism in aesthetics, we are blamed for not being more severe toward evil, more exclusive in our taste for beauty ; but in reality this is due to a delicacy of conscience. It is through love for the beautiful and for the good that we are so timid, sometimes so weak in our moral judgments. Absolute centuries destroyed an entire harvest in order to remove the tares. We, who revere the divine radiance wherever it sheds its light, and, who, accustomed to regard human affairs in more liberal spirit, know that good and evil are intermingled here below in invisible proportions, hesitate in the utterance of arbitrary verdicts lest we should destroy some atom of beauty in our condemnation.

" In this sense, the Satan of Scheffer appears to me as a consoling sign of progress. In order to paint evil with so little anger and with so great pity, it must be that the dominion of evil is much impaired ; only the disarmed are treated with so great leniency. At bottom, if evil inspires us with less hatred, it does not inspire us with less disgust. The moral sentiment of our day is more delicate than it ever was, but it does not translate itself into curses. This, it seems to me, is the answer that must be made to those who charge our age with skepticism. Perhaps we are skeptical in relation to abstract forms, but not of those essential truths which are the principles of human nobility. We make sacrifices to our faith every day, and when we are asked to put that faith into form we know not what to reply. We are not pharisees who gain paradise by skill in cards, who know every secret of the present and the future life ; our faith hesitates because it is sincere, because silence appears to us to be the only language worthy of God, and because in the order of religious things every symbol seems to us inferior to the majesty of that which excites us to expression.

" It is owing to the fact that the faith of our century is a faith without forms, that the Art of our days possesses a religious function superior to that of the theologian or the philosopher. Logic will never leave the realm of controversy, and in itself it engenders doubt. Art, on the contrary, discarding everything that belongs to dispute, and attaching itself only to ideal forms of beauty and moral goodness, raises itself superior to all argument, and inspires faith. The artist sees in the condition of a pure idea that which appears to the critic with all its angles, contradictions and asperities. All philosophy is necessarily imperfect, since it aspires to inclose the infinite within a limited

framework : how could the human mind seize, how could the word render that, the essence of which is of an ineffable being ? Art itself is infinite; Art, searching the soul for what is good and pure, makes us await the unquestionable. It is thus that Art appears to us as the highest degree of criticism, we attain to it the day when, convinced of the insufficiency of all systems, we arrive at wisdom, that is to say, succeed in recognizing that each formula, whether religious or philosophical, is attackable in its material expression, and that truth is only the voice of nature disengaged from every scholastic symbol and from every exclusive dogma.

" Let us thank Scheffer for showing us a Christ that we all adore. The sight of his picture softens us ; we turn away with the conviction that humanity is called to an unknown destiny, it is true, but certainly to a divine one. I have no right to appreciate the work of Ary Scheffer from an artistic point of view. Some may, perhaps, regret that he did not display in it a more vigorous execution and more brilliant coloring. Scheffer, however, aspiring especially to render the idea, a too positive manner would be with him a sort of contradiction. The materialistic success of color would give too much body to the lovely beings born of his pencil, and to which he grants just as much life as is necessary in order to express the subtlest shades of sentiment. Coloring is a quality essential to a painter who seeks to render life and reality ; but those artifices by which the eyes are reached when one does not know how to address the soul, would have been a misplaced luxury with the eminent artist who, in our century, has the best known how to find a way to the heart."

In concluding our thoughts and facts about Ary Scheffer, let us add the words of the same writer, who thus exclaims :

" With the sad disappearance of this man of rare genius and of elevated feeling from our century—so barren in noble natures—how many lessons of moral teachings, how many sources of profound emotion and high thought are lost to us forever ! "

**NOTE.**—For further and more ample information of Scheffer and his works, we refer our readers to an article in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," by M. Vitet, for October, 1858 ; to the "Gazette des Beaux Arts," in the numbers for February 1 and July 1, 1859, and to an excellent article in the "Atlantic Monthly" for September of this year. In connection with the above criticism on the " Temptation of Christ," we would refer our readers to the admirable criticism of Mr. Stillman, published in the first number of the CRAYON, Jan. 3, 1855.

THE golden age never leaves the world : it exists still, and shall exist, till love, health, poetry, are no more—but only for the young.—*Bulwer.*

THE facts of history and of science constitute only the materials of knowledge. Fact without philosophy is like matter uninformed with mind ; or like the letters in a printer's case, compared with the same when put into type ; or as the words and syllables of a dead language without an interpreter.—*Oulow.*

## VALLEY BY THE MOUNTAINS.

### A PERSIAN SKETCH.

WHERE 'neath the glances of the radiant morn,  
Luristan's high crown, flushing in the dawn,  
Hath lovier visions burst upon the sight  
Than that whilch hath been thine since new-born light.  
Scattered the gloom of chaos? Beauty here  
Her throne of majesty doth surely rear;  
And 'neath her dome of pearly mottled blue  
Reveals a scene magnificent to view.  
Romance itself here in that wild ravine  
Must linger all the year; now in soft, green  
Voluptuous loveliness attired; and then  
Veiled by the jealous hand of Winter, when  
The monarch of white locks and silvery crown  
Returns to this his palace, and casts down  
Soft, snowy carpets, and bids Nature wear  
A robe of whiteness pure as childhood's fair  
And sunny dream of home and love and bliss.

O surely in a scene as bright as this  
Th' enkindled soul must upward rise and greet  
The smile of heaven with homage warm and sweet;  
The soft, green, slumbering loveliness we see  
'Round yonder brook shall voiceless quickener be  
Of tender dreams which in the sunshine sleep  
Of Fancy's eye, and of heart-musings deep.  
The painter, when with wizard hand he makes  
The canvas to a mirror change, which takes  
Th' enchanting image of this scene of grace,  
(There fixed, as is the sweet and flowery face  
We fondly loved preserved in memory's glass;  
A picture bright that never thence can pass)—  
The painter of this scene shall honored be  
By souls exalted and refined to see  
This charming page of Nature's poetry.

As Venus smiling by the side of Mars,  
With countenance as fair as dew-washed stars,  
Turned lovingly up toward the hero grand;  
So looks this loveliest vale of all the land  
Up toward Luristan's rugged heights sublime,  
The mighty guardians of this rosy clime.  
Lo! in the distance, sparkling through the green,  
The minarets of Ispahan are seen.

REV. GIBSON HUNTINGTON.

MERE exemption from error in general is within the reach of an ordinary genius. The characteristic of a powerful one is to grasp after new or vigorous ideas, though it may hold them in connection with several minor inaccuracies. . . . We might safely affirm that in ninety cases out of a hundred, a mind above the common is more distinguished by comprehension and variety than by unimpeachable correctness of thought, which is compatible enough with poverty and sterility of intellect.—*Clulow.*

THERE are some to whose eye external nature, which is but the garment of the Creator, by the very grace and amplitude of its foldings, seems to conceal the feet of Divinity.—*Boyes.*